

asked around. I have been on TV, I have invited folks to let me know. Oh, no, Viagra is fine; birth control is not fine. Just put the pieces together yourself. I think this decision discriminates against women, and in the slippery slope argument you are going to see it affect everyone. And we need to listen to the women who rely on birth control to improve their health and the health of their families. Let me tell you a few stories. Raquel from Sacramento was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2010. After her treatment her doctors told her she needed to use birth control to ensure she did not become pregnant for the next 3 years because she was really sick. Luckily, her employer covers birth control and now, happily, 4 years later she is pregnant with her first child. What could have happened to her if she had gone through an unintended pregnancy? It could have been pretty devastating. What if she had worked for a different employer who refused to offer her that birth control? Her health and the health of her child would have been at risk and that would have been tragic. So let's listen to her.

Let's listen to Katherine from Pleasant Hill, CA, who relies on birth control after having her first child.

Both my husband and I want to be the best possible parents for our son, and having another child so soon would hurt our ability to do that. A variety of affordable birth control options are crucial for me and for all first-time moms like me!

Many years ago I was on the board of Planned Parenthood, and what we said all the time was that our dream was that every child be a wanted child—a wanted child. As a parent myself and as a grandparent I tell you right now it takes a lot to raise a child. Hillary Clinton said it takes a village. It certainly takes loving parents, and it takes a loving family. It certainly costs money, and it certainly takes energy.

We want our families to be healthy. We want our families to be productive, and birth control is a success story. It breaks my heart that women just like Katherine who work at Hobby Lobby and other for-profit corporations now could be denied access to affordable health care unless we fix this.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act was not about giving your boss the power over you like this. It was about giving you the right to make your own choices and decisions. We need to listen to women like Ariana in Redding, CA, who wrote:

I am a recent college graduate trying to make ends meet and pay off my student loans. It is a great relief to know I can get the birth control I need without a copay.

These are real stories. If the boss doesn't like that you choose birth control, that is his right. If he wants to sit down with his daughter and tell her his religious objection, and if she agrees with him, that is fine. I mean, that is what America is about. But don't take your religious beliefs, your ideology,

your biases, your prejudices, and your opinions and foist them on your employees. That is not this country. That is not what we are about.

Shouldn't we care more about the rights of women and their families than the rights of a few employers who can exercise that in their families? This bill we are going to vote on is critical, and I hope it won't die as a result of partisanship. We have to rise above partisanship around here.

"Equal justice under law"—that is what it says over the portico. And frankly, there is another issue. If you look at what has happened to the rates of abortion since we have seen more use of birth control, they are going down. There has been a study in one of our Nation's big cities that proved that because there was broad use of birth control, abortions went down by 50 percent. Imagine. So if that is our concern regardless of whether we are pro-choice or not, we shouldn't be embracing decisions that make it more difficult for women to get access to birth control.

So equal justice under the law doesn't say: "except for women." It doesn't say: "except if my boss disagrees with me." It is pretty beautiful. It is pretty clear. It is something that we have to respect. It is for the ages, and tomorrow we are going to see if our colleagues agree. Every Senator must take a stand tomorrow for individual liberty. When we vote tomorrow, let's be reminded: Women are watching. The American people will hold each of us accountable if we fail to protect their rights and their ability to decide what is best for their families.

I have been around a while. I was around when one of the Bushes was actually on the board of Planned Parenthood—George Herbert Walker Bush. Suddenly this issue is back—birth control—and suddenly we are arguing over it again.

So I say this. I may be wearing a white jacket, but it is not a white doctor's coat. I am not a doctor, and I don't want to put myself, as a politician, in between a woman and her doctor or in between a family and their doctor. Let's leave important health care choices where they belong: with women, with families, with doctors, and not with politicians, in the Senate or Justices sitting in a courtroom.

Thank you very much. I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if cloture is invoked on either the Bay or LaFleur nomination the confirmation vote or votes occur at 3:15 p.m. with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECT WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act, to stand up for what I thought was a commonly shared value—that a woman's health care decisions are between her and her doctor, not her and her boss. I thought that was well-established, straightforward—simple, even.

But it turns out that the majority of the Supreme Court thought differently when it came to certain kinds of health care decisions: whether a woman would have access to contraceptives without copays as guaranteed by Federal law. As we all know now, 2 weeks ago the Supreme Court held in Hobby Lobby that an employer's personal beliefs can trump some of the most private and significant health care decisions a woman makes.

So let me be very clear on where I stand: What kind of birth control a female employee uses is not her boss's business.

I have heard some of the supporters of the Supreme Court decision argue that ruling is a narrow ruling, and that it only applies to closely held family businesses. That doesn't tell the whole story because just 3 days after this ruling in Hobby Lobby the Court said that a nonprofit religious college didn't have to comply with a contraceptive coverage requirement even though it had already had an accommodation that allowed it to avoid paying for such coverage itself.

The majority even pointed to this accommodation in the Hobby Lobby ruling as an example of a less restrictive alternative that could be open to for-profit businesses. A few days later that same accommodation wasn't good enough.

In her dissent Justice Sotomayor wrote:

Those who are bound by our decisions usually believe that they can take us at our word. Not so today.

In other words, in less than a week the Supreme Court's conservative majority went from issuing a supposedly narrow ruling to potentially broadening it to encompass a new class of institutions. The impact of the ruling in Hobby Lobby will most definitely not be limited to those closely held businesses, as some say. I have heard others argue, in essence: Don't worry. The ruling doesn't expressly ban access to contraceptives. It just shifts the additional cost of the coverage back to the women.

But those who say erecting a barrier of cost between a woman and birth control will give her the same access she had before the decision don't understand what women have to go through to get covered and don't understand the many reasons why women use birth control. Since the coverage requirement went into effect last year, the number of women who got their birth